

Statement on politics of the Kwan Um School of Zen Europe

"In original nature There is no this and that. The Great Round Mirror has no likes or dislikes. Do not cling to your opinions. Do not discuss your private views with others. To cling to and defend your opinions is to destroy your practice. Put away all your opinions. This is true Buddhism."
(Temple Rules of Zen Master Seung Sahn).

Our vow is to practice for the sake of all beings and to create harmony among people. When Zen Master Seung Sahn began practicing Dharma he only strove for each person's inside independence, not outside independence.

This statement is a reminder about finding the right attitude as practitioners towards passionate feelings that arise from holding opinions such as political conviction. It is binding for all our Zen Centers and practicing places that belong to the Kwan Um School of Zen Europe (KUZSEU). Ethical conduct is the foundation of meditation practice. Personal political opinions are private and are not to be promoted or widespread neither offline nor online, neither by speech or symbols such as flags or pictograms.

Those individuals who hold a representative position in our school (e.g. Zen Master, Ji Do Poep Sa Nim, Abbott, Dharma teachers, member of the board etc.) need to be most mindful to balance their personal political opinion and the impact on others due to their function in the school even if they speak outside the school and not in their function or position in or of the school.

On Speech

"Your evil tongue will lead you to ruin. You must keep the stopper in the bottle. Only open it when necessary. Always speak well, in the manner of a Bodhisattva. Do not use vulgar language in the temple. If you come upon two people fighting, do not provoke them by angry speech. Rather use good words to soothe their anger. Do not make the bad karma of lying, exaggerating, making trouble between people, or cursing others."
(Temple Rules of Zen Master Seung Sahn).

The teachings of the Buddha about Right Speech give us good guidance: Right Speech is one of the components of the Noble Eightfold Path, along with Right View, Right Intention, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

Right speech gives rise to peace and happiness in oneself and others. The Buddha defined it as "abstinence from false speech, abstinence from malicious speech, abstinence from harsh speech, and abstinence from idle chatter." This means not lying, not using speech in ways that create discord among people, not using swear words or a cynical, hostile or raised tone of voice, and not engaging in gossip.

In positive words that means to say only what is true, to speak in ways that promote harmony among people, to use a tone of voice that is pleasing, kind, and gentle, and to speak mindfully in order that our speech is useful and purposeful - Always speak well, in the manner of a Bodhisattva.

Approved by the European teachers group in December 2018